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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the lives of some notable women in the history of Chile from the time of the conquistadors to the present. The significant women described in the paper include: (1) Ines de Suarez (accompanied Pedro de Validivia in 1544); (2) Micaela Bastidas Puyucahua (wife of Incan leader Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru, about 1780); (3) Gabriela Mistral (Nobel laureate poet of the early 20th century); (4) Amanda Labarca Hubertson (women's rights advocate of this century); (5) Matilde Urrutia (wife of renowned Nobel-prize winning poet Pablo Neruda); and (6) Ana Gonzalez (a famous actress in Chile). (EH)

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Fulbright-Hays Seminar
CHILE 1995

WORTHY WOMEN OF CHILE: WHAT ROLE DID THEY PLAY?

by Ruth S. Hertzberg

Every society knows about its worthy men. To name but a few in US culture, there is Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Abrahm Lincoln and George Washington. In Chile, the long thin nation-state with a highly varied climate, every citizen knows of the conquistador Pedro De Valdivia, the liberator Bernardo O'Higgins, and the modern day democrat Eduardo Frei, son of a former president, who was also a great democrat. Less, perhaps even nothing, is known about worthy women.

Yet, worthy women have also played a role in the history of every culture and every continent In Western history the names Jeanne d'Arc, Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great are familiar. In North America perhaps the most famous woman of this century is Eleanor Roosevelt. In South America it may be Isablel Peron. No doubt there are similar figures in Mexican or Canadian history, but there names are not familiar. Worthy women have not been accorded their proper place in the history of their country or area. For instance, there are many women in Latin American History who made important contributions to their nation who deserve recognition and praise.

It is the purpose of this paper to describe the lives of some famous women in the history of the South American country of Chile, from the time of the conquistadores to the present day This survey includes the life of a lady who is said to be a living legend in Chile, the actress Ana Gonzalez. I was fortunate enough to meet Senora Gonzalez and chat with her, as part of my 1995 summer Fulbright Grant. The significant women whose lives I will describe are:

(I) Ines de Suarez, the woman who accompanied Pedro de Validivia in 1544,

(II) Micaela Bastidas Puyucahua, wife of the Inca leader Jose Gabriel Tupac Amaru, about 1780,

(III) Gabriela Mistral, the famous nobel laureate poet of the first half of the 20th century,

(IV) Amanda Labarca Hubertson, a staunch womens rights advocate also of this century,

(V) Matilde Urrutia, the wife of the renowned Nobel-prize winning poet, Pablo Neruda, and

(VI) Ana Gonzalez, the most famous actress in Chile.

Chilean history as apart from the general history of Latin America is not very familiar to American students. If they know anything of this area, so close to the United States of America, and yet so far from it, they know of the conquistadores like Cortes and Pizarro, and the acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone. They have heard of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Thus a study of the women who have contributed to the history of Chile will be totally new to them, as will be the circumstances surrounding this study.

One of the most influential factors in a study of women in Latin America is the idea of male dominance called "machismo" This very sexist phenomena , "machismo", has greatly influenced and limited the achievements of women. Machismo has been of great importance in the development of social and family roles throughout Latin America. Certainly machismo is part of Chilean history.This paper will include a section which discusses the principles of machismo, as

well as its alterego called "marianismo". These sexist ideas are still very much alive.

Worthy Women of Chile is presented as a curriculum unit of four weeks in length. It can be used as part of a course in Latin American History, or a Women's History course focusing on women of the non-Western world. I plan to use the play about Micaela Bayastudas Puyacahua in my World History class at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania.

I. Inez Suarez - A Foremost Founder

The pictures accompanying the brief article from a Chilean encyclopedia show Inez Suarez attired in armor, defending the city of Santiago and wielding a sword. In fact, she evidently decapitated six Indian chieftains who were held prisoner! Thus we might compare her to Joan of Arc although my research about that lady (Joan of Arc) establishes that when she killed her English enemies, she wept over them. Inez Suarez evidently thought of "los Indios" as brutal savages who deserved massacre by any means and she was willing to wield those "means" herself.

She was born in 1507 in Spain and came to the new world, actually the West Indies, in 1537 when she would have been 30 years old. Marino de Lobero who met her in Malaga said that she was a "woman who gave great moral uplifting and Christian teaching to our soldiers" (the conquistadores) of Spain. Pedro de Valdivia , the famed conquistador, conqueror of Peru and Chile, probably met her in Venezuela. She accompanied him and served as his mistress (1) when he went to Chile.

When the fort of Santiago de Chile, established by Valdivia,was attacked by Indians on the 11th of September 1541, Inez Suarez personally participated in its defense. She worked to heal the wounded and encouraged the soldiers to keep fighting in the defense of the city. But her role in this defense was not limited to encouragement and care of the injured.

This assault of the Indians had the object of freeing six of their chiefs who were held prisoner and who had been sentenced to death. Even though the Spanish did their best to fend off the fierce attacks of the Indians, the Indian assailants were winning the battle. It was at this point in the battle that the chronicler (who was he?) said that Inez unsheathed her sword and with her own hands killed the Indian prisoners!

Soon afterward the bloody heads of these infidels were thrown at the attacking Indians, which produced great fear and terror among them. Several contempory analysts think that this daring act caused the retreat of "las indigenas" (the Indians).

But the real reason for the triumph of the Spaniards, the encyclopedia article hastens to add, was the cavalry who evidently appeared at the right moment and chased the fleeing Indians and massacred those who refused to surrender. During the entire period, the article states, the valiant Inez Suarez was clad in armor as were the rest of the soldiers.

As a reward for her role in the attack of the Indians, Valdivia, the conqueror gave to Inez, his mistress, the Indian chief called Apoquindo, with all his sub-chiefs and Indians who resided in

the Mapocho Valley, so that she might make use of all of them. She got 500 Indians while Valdivia himself got 1500. (2) Under the encomienda system each worthy conqueror was to civilize and Christianize the Indians, while they worked for him (or her).

Valdivia returned to Peru, and Ines Suarez remained in Chile. In 1548, she married Rodrigo de Quiroga. and lived on the land that she had been given. This marriage lasted thirty years, but there were no children.When Ines Suarez died in 1580, all of the wealth accumulated was given to charitable foundations. An opera having the name Inez de Suarez, commemorates her role in saving Santiago and portrays the gory incidents in which she beheaded the Indian chiefs.

According to a viewer of this opera,with impassioned song she overcame irresolute males, and with an outstretched arm ordered the decapitation of the savages heads. "Bang" went the orchestra, and to a shrieking voice, a head on a pike rose over the outer wall. Another "Bang" and another head appeared, until seven bloody heads appeared on pikes. In the end Valdivia's fortified hill of Santa Lucia had been saved for Spain. (3)

Can she be compared with Joan of Arc? Her accomplishment was somewhat similar but she is not and was not a candidate for beatification. Her mercy and compassion extended only to her fellow Spaniards. To her the Indians were brutal savages who deserved death or worse. She was obviously a woman of daring and determination. She must be considered as one of the founders of Chile...very different from the typical Spanish donas of the times.

II Micaela Bayastuda Puyacuhua (4)

Lest one think that the Indians of South America offered little or no resistance to the incursions of the Spaniards, historians can cite the uprising led by Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui, the second Tupac Amaru. In 1779 he raised the standard of revolt in the Andes Mountains of Peru, Bolivia and northern Chile. A well-educated and respected Indian chieftain, he hoped to relieve the tax burdens and oppression of his people. His chief aid and advisor was his wife Micaela Bastudas Puyucahua, whom he married in 1760 when he was only sixteen. In December 1780, she wrote a letter to her husband in which she upbraided him for dallying in villages where he was evidently popular and failing to prepare adequately for the seige of Cuzco (Peru), which ultimately failed, and led to the death of Jose, Micaela, and their entire family.

I have chosen to incorporate the words of this letter into a brief play which can be performed to demonstrate that the Indians did fight the Spaniards and that Indian women as well as women in general are as bright, maybe even brighter than their more famous spouses.

Indian Revolt in Peru

Characters: Narrator, Micaela, Four Children, First Indian Brave, Second Indian Brave
Narrator: It is December 6, 1780. Micaela Bayastuda Puyacuhua, wife of Tupac Amaru II, is playing with her children, before putting them to bed. Her husband Jose Gabriel (El Chepe) is off in the village of Yauri celebrating his victory and forgetting the debt he owes his soldiers. His wife

is lonely and frightened.

Micaela: My dear sons, I can only play this game once more with you, and then you must go to sleep so that tomorrow you will be ready for your father's return. Be good soldiers and pick up your arrows and bows to play another day. (The children obey and lie down in the corners of the room.)
1st Indian brave rushes in: My lady Micaela, the soldiers are frightened. They have heard that the Spaniards of Lampa are going to surround us. They are terrified and seek to flee, fearing the punishment that might befall them. We will lose all the people that you have gathered to prepare for the descent on Cuzco. The Spaniards in Cuzco will be able to unite with the troops from Lima who are already on the march. Where is your husband?

Micaela: He is in Yauri. I do not know when he will return.

Brave: He must come at once. Otherwise he will lose his army.

Micaela: I will write him a letter. Wait a bit. Get me some paper and a pencil.
She quickly writes a note, as the Brave stalks up and down, impatiently
Micaela: Can you read?. The Brave shakes his head.

Micaela: Let me read it to you.
Dear Chepe,

You are causing me grief and sorrow. While you saunter through the villages, our soldiers rightly grow tired and are leaving for their homes. I have warned you many times against dallying in these villages when there is nothing to be done. But you continue to saunter about without considering that the soldiers lack food supplies even though they are given money; for their pay will soon be gone. They will all depart, leaving us helpless and we will pay with our lives.

I must caution you about all this, though it pains me. But if you wish to ruin us, you can just sleep. You were so careless that you walked alone through the streets of the town of Yauri, and even went to the extreme of climbing the church tower. I am only a shadow of myself and beside myself with anxiety, and so I beg you to return.

I do not care about my own life, only about those of our poor family who need all my help. Thus if the enemy comes from Parurp, as I suggested in my last letter, I am prepared to march out to meet them with our forces.

I gave you plenty of warnings to march on Cuzco immediately, but you took them all lightly, allowing the enemy sufficient time to prepare, as they have done, placing cannon on Picchu mountain, plus other trickery so dangerous that you are no longer in a position to attack them.

I pray that God keeps you many years, my husband.

Will you take this letter and give it to my husband?

1st Brave: Yes my lady, I will find him.

2nd Brave: My lady, the enemy is here... in Archos. Hide the children!

Micaela: I shall march out to meet them, though it cost me my life. Find my husband!
She marches out carrying a long spear.

Narrator: Micaela did not lose her life... then. But in the siege of Cuzco initiated by her husband in January 1781, (evidently too late) she and her husband and her sons were seized and executed by the Spanish. Micaela Bastida was condemned to have her tongue cut out, and then garroted (strangled by an iron collar tightened with a screw) in the presence of her husband, who was the last to die.

Thus ended the life of Micaela Bastidas Puyucahua, a lady endowed with love , loyalty and superior intelligence. If her husband had followed her advice, the history of the rebellion might have been different.

During the years when Chile sought and gained her independence from Spain in 1818, the names of two women appear: Rosita O'Higgins and Javiera Carrera, who are both the sisters of more famous men. Bernardo O'Higgins is considered to be the liberator of Chile while Jose Miguel Carrera was a competitor, a would be dictator, who was killed with the consent of his rival, Bernardo O'Higgins. In any case neither of these women made a significant contribution to the drive for independence. Rosita O'Higginssupported her brother's endeavors and served as his housekeeper, especially after the death of Dona Isabel, Bernardo O'Higgins' mother. Javiera Carrera was said to be more fanatical and vindictive than her brothers, but unlike them, she escaped death and spent the rest of her life in Argentina. Neither of these women seemed "worthy" enough to study in depth.

These are the only two women mentioned in the standard histories of Chile of the 18th and 19th century. Certainly there were no women on a par with either Inez Suarez or Micaela Bastidas Puyucahua. We must ask why women seem to have played so small a part in the history of Chile and other Latin American countries. Part of the answer is found in that peculiar Latin sexist philosophy known as "Machismo"

Just exactly what is "machismo"? It is the quality of being a male, demonstrated by the courage and daring of the toreador as he successfully confronts and kills the bull. It implies male superiority and power, especially in sexual relationships... in short, male chauvinism. The male expects his wife to be a virgin at marriage, and he expects her to yield to his advances... to service him in his sexual needs. She is not supposed to enjoy sex, or to be troubled when, in later life her husband indulges in infidelity, as the machismo norm expects him to. Divorce is not permitted, and the wife who remains faithful is viewed as a saint.

Machismo is mostly a New World phenomena. It made its way to America via the soldiers and adventurers who participated in the conquest. The ideal man exhibited the traits of "machismo", but what were the characteristics of the ideal woman?

The ideal woman of Latin America has a sort of semi-divinity, a moral superioroity and spiritual strength. Her spiritul strength begets and infinite capacity for humility and sacrifice. No self-denial is too great for her and she is ifinitely patient with the men of her world. And she is totally submissive to the demands of the men: husbands, sons, fathers, brothers. For in her heart of hearts she believes that men are like little boys whose intemperance and foolishness must be forgiven because it is their nature.

Spiritually speaking, a woman is superior to a man.Her semi-divinity comes from her association with the universal mother or Mary. There is a movement within the Roman Catholic Church that involves the special veneration of the figure of the virgin Mary.This "Marian" cult was almost immediately manifested in the vision of a young Indian convert who saw a figure of "Our Mother" north of Mexico City. His vision was recognized as an authentic apparitionof the Virgin Mary and she (the vision) was given the name of Our Lady of Guadalupe to become patroness of New Spain and of all Latin America. (5)

Many Latin American countries have had persons who have seen visions of incarnations of Mary. Thus it can be seen that the other side of machismo is "marianismo" and women of all classes strive to associate themselves with the beauty and the purity of the divine virgin. Marianismo like machismo is a sexist philosophy which if it denies women pleasure on earth, guarantees it in heaven.

Perhaps these sexist philosophies help to explain the limited part that women have played in politics in Latin America. Also it may explain their satisfaction with their role in life as well as their lack of ambition to change this role. A north American woman, describing Chilean women in the mid nineteenth century wrote:

> The beauty of the women has been greatly overrated. As they approach middle life, they incline to flesh. They are indolent and slovenly. The Chileno lady rises late;she dresses hastily, throwing a charitable shawl about her to hide manifold sins of omission. Her little feet are carelessly thrust into slippers; her hair is plaited in two braids that fall down her back. Her ablutions are merely a form of politeness to the washbowl.
>
> In this dishabille she dawdles about, amusing herself with some fancy work, until ennui drives her to seek refuge in shopping or paying visits. Then she makes her appearance in all the splendor of silks and diamnds... Servants are abundant... (6)

Men in middle age were not so carefully described except to say that both sexes avoid personal labor and that men are addicted to gambling and smoking. This piece, written by the wife of a diplomat from the United States of America obviously described the "upper" classes and found customs and dress in the U.S.A. to be far superior to those in Chile.

Yet when we come to the 20th century, we find outstanding women as well as men, famous throughout the world for their intellect and their great gifts. The most outstanding woman of Chile was Gabriel Mistral who was both a Nobel Laureate in poetry and an international diplomat. Her writing is pervaded by an overwhelming focus on loneliness, desparation, and death. Moreover many of her poems are vaguely connected with the sexist philosophy of

marianismo. The sources for the sorrowful subjects of her most profound poems, are, of course, her life experiences. But these experiences are enigmatic; they remain wrapped in mystery.

III Gabriela Mistral

Gabriela Mistral has been called the embodiment of the Chilean people and nation. She was, in the 55th year of her life, awarded the Nobel Prise for Literature for her poetry entitled Desolacion (Despair), Tenura (Tenderness) and Tala, a collection of poems for the young victims of the Spanish Civil War. All of her poetry focused on sadness and loneliness except perhaps the last volume, in that it was a mixtureof holy hymns and naive songs for children about bread, wine, salt, wheat, and water, the needs of human life. (7)

What was there in her life that was the source of her poetry? She was born Lucila Godoy in 1890 in the Elqui valley, east of the city of La Serena, in the northern Andean region of Chile called the "cordillera". When she was not even three years old, her father deserted his small family to find new adventures. His legacy to his small daughter was a handful of romantic poems, his reputation, as a teacher and his vagabond soul.He was never mentioned in Gabriela's poetry; no doubt she absorbed the disdain that her mother, Dona Petronila, felt for him. (8)

At the age of nine, a significant event occurred in her life. Her teacher, in the small school that she attended, accused her of stealing sheets of paper belonging to the school. In a rage, the teacher ordered Gabriela from the classroom, incited the other children to throw stones at her, and recorded officially that the child was a "debil mental". (9) This childhood incident of injustice was never forgotten. Moreover it marked the end of her formal schooling.

During the long period of financial hardship following the desertion of Gabriela's father, Emelina, her half sister, contributed her modest teacher's salary to sustain the family. The paternal grandmother also joined the family since Gabriela's grandfather had been sleeping with their maid. Thus Gabriela grew up among angry and frustrated wives.(10) Notice how both men conform to the macho image.

At fifteen Lucila (Gabriela) was forced to seek work and she found it, eventually becoming a teacher in the little village of Cantera. It was there, at the age of twenty, that she met a young railroad man, Romelio Ureta. A passionate love affair developed between them. And when, on November 25, 1909, the young man shot himself in the head, a postcard was found bearing the name "Lucila Godoy". (11) The impact of his death upon her was not known until 1914 when Lucila's first group of poems called Los Sonetos de la Muerte (The Sonnets of Death) were published under the pseudonym of Gabriela Mistral, a name which came from the Archangel Gabriel, and the fierce mistral wind that blows over the south of France. With these "Sonnets of Death" , Lucila or Gabriela won the Chilean national prize for poetry. (12) Her poem *To See Him Again* illustrates the depths of her despair:

And shall it never be again, never? Not on nights filled
with trembling of stars, or by the pure light
of virginal dawns, or on afternoons of immolation?

Never at the edge of any pale pathway
that borders the field, or beside any
tremulous fountain white under the moon?

...

And, together with him, to be all springtimes
and all winters, entwined in one anguished knot
around his blood-stained neck!

Doris Dana - Translator (13)

Thus she became an important national writer and the Chilean Ministry of Education became aware of her teaching career by waiving the formal degree requirements and appointing her to the rank of principal in liceos (high schools), in southern Chile, and finally in Santiago. Her fame spread abroad, and in 1922 the Mexican Minister of Education invited Gabriela to come to Mexico and carry out a program of educational reform. She worked with Indian adults and children and in Mexico City a statue was erected in her honor as a school was named after her. 1922 was also the year her first book of poetry called Desolacion (Despair) which included the "Sonnets of Death", was published in New York City. Her second book called Ternura or (Tenderness) was published in Madrid in 1924. (14)

In 1929, twenty years after the death of Romelio Ureta, Gabriela suffered the loss of her mother, Dona Petronila. Gabriela was abroaad at an international conference, and she blamed the Chilean government for not informing her of her mother's worsening condition. Gabriela had been icreasingly critical of the policies of the Chilean government, and after her mother's death, she continued to live abroad, in voluntary exile. Some of Gabriela's finest poetry commemorated her mother's death. It was the second tragedy she was to endure. (15)

The third tragedy is stranger. It involved the loss of an eighteen year old boy, Juan Miguel Godoy Mendoza, her nephew, a son born to her half-brother Carlos Miguel Godoy. Gabriela was allowed to adopt him as a baby, and she showered great affection on him. He fulfilled her maternal need and allowed her to be a mother. In 1943 in Brazil, Juan Migel, called Yin-Yin killed himself, for reasons which are not entirely clear. Gabriela insisted that he had been murdered, but the police believed he had imbibed arsenic because he believed he could not adapt to the Portuguese language, because he was required to repeat schoolwork he had completed in France, and because he had a spinal deformity. The shock of his death ate at her for the rest of her life. Even when she received the news of the awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1945 she felt emptiness, she said (16)

Twice she had chosen the United States as her home, serving as a Consul of Chile in California and New York. She was a delegate to the United Nations, served on the Committe for Women's Rights, and played an important part in the founding of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Emergency fund. She made the first worldwide appeal for funds in 1946 called "Appeal for Children". With the successof this appeal UNICEF came into being. (17)

After the death of her adopted son, she wrote one more volume of poetry, Luto. In this group of poems, Yin-Yin is likened to the archangel Michael who was sent to heaven to attain

celestial beauty. She returned to her native country, Chile, to receive the Premio Nacional de Literatura, a much coveted award, in 1954. The Chilean Congress honored her as Chile's "life consul" and said that her consulate was to be wherever she found a suitable climate for her health and a pleasant atmosphere to pursue her studies. She chose Roslyn Harbor, Long Island, New York and lived there for the next three years. She died early in January of 1957. President Ibanez of Chile decree a three day period of national mourning. She was eulogized at the United Nations, where she had worked for women and children. The newspapers of the world also paid her tribute as the foremost poet of the Spanish tongue.(18)

So a very great poet passed into history. With whom and with what can we connect her? She had a marvelous talent which came forth from her in many memorable verses, alive with feelings of love and sorrow and yet more love. Does her life story carry out any of the themes of machismo and marianismo? Her father and his early abandonment of her and her family and her grandfathers extra-marital affairs may confirms the worst view of the macho male. Gabriela on her part, can be said to personify, in some aspects, the marian cult in her evident abstinence from sex, in her idolizing of mothers and children, and her feelings, throughout her life, of suffering and deprivation. She was perhaps Chile's first stateswoman, as she was Chile's first Nobel prize winner, but she was also an enigmatic woman whose essence and perceptions remain a mystery.

IV Amanda LaBarca Hubertson (19)

It is much easier for a North American woman to admire and identify with Amanda LaBarca, the foremost educator, writer and defender of women's rights in Chile. The encyclopedia article points out that she had to overcome social and cultural barriers placed on her by a traditionally conservative society. In the end she triumphed in the pursuit of her ideals.

She was born in Santaigo in 1886 and lived to be almost 90. Thus she was a contemporary of Gabriela Mistral, but her life was far, far different. She was baptized Amanda Pinto Sepulveda. She was a superb student , receiving her bachelor's degree in humanities at the age of fifteen.

She showed a great spirit of independence as she resisted assuming the role of a submissive woman. She could not stand the fact that her younger brother had authority over her, with the approval of her father. As far as religious creeds were concerned, there was a religious dispute between her Catholic mother and her Protestant father. Not even the fact that she had her first communion (influenced by her grandmother) influenced her to like one religious creed more than the other.

After studying English during a vacation she was able to work immediately at Santiago College as secretary of the board of directors and primary school professor. She lived at the college, which resulted in a break in her relations with her family. During this period she became acquainted with a writer named Guillermo Labarca Hubertson, whom she later married. Both of them enrolled in the Pedagogical Institute, she in Spanish Education, and he in History and Geography. Her mother, hearing rumors of romance between them demanded that they marry, or she would be sent to a convent. We can assume they were living together. Respecting her orders they quickly marrried.From the moment that she married Guillermo, Amanda broke with her

family and adopted the name of her husband. From then on she would be known as Amanda Labarca Hubertson.

She obtained the title of professor of Spanish when she was only eighteen years old, in December 1905. She was sent to work at Normal School No. 3 where she stayed until 1909. Her first work, Impresiones de Juventad (Impressions of Youth) was published.

When her husband went to study at Columbia University in the United States, she accompanied him. She also went to the Sorbonne in Paris and travelled throughout Europe. It was here that she became aware of the ideas of feminism which she had supported from an early age. Within herself, Amanda sensed that women must be awareof their problems in the context of the national reality in their country. This was only possible through education. Long standing problems which were insoluble could be overcome. Amanda did not only theorize in this respect. When she returned to Chile in1913, she delivered a series of lectures on feminine activities in the United States. These lectures resulted in the formation of a women's group, the first such group in Chile.. In 1919 this group became the *Circulo Femenino de Estudios* (The Circle of Feminist Studies). Amanda Labarca struggled for the emancipation of women. She understood that most of the women were involved in domestic labor. She wanted women to have the same privileges as men. Her work to attain these goals was done in an environment which was hostile to all change, a media which was rooted in old social customs in which women (especially women in the upper classes) carried out their household role, taking care of their husband and their children, hiding all their problems.

Her second work Tierras Extranas (Strange Lands) was published in 1915. The next year she was named to the board of directors of a Liceo(a high school), but her appointment was opposed by the conservative sectors of the nation. Without hesitation, the President of the Republic Juan Luis Sanfuentes, named her as the director of Liceo No. 5. She served in this capacity until 1918.

She began to focus on educational problems Her volume entitled La Educacion Secundaria (Secondary Education) was published as she became a part of university level education. She undertook the duties of a professor of child psychology at the Instituto Pedagogico of the Uiversity of Chile. Her literary work continued as she published La Lampara Maravillosa y Cuentos a Mi Senor (The Marvellous Lamp and Stories of My Husband). At the same time she was also the Secretary of the Education Association.

She was known as a woman who took the initiative in all of her courses. She had great success among the female students at the University of Chile.From 1925-1931 she was director of the Summer School and after that she was the Director of Cultural Extension in the same university.

In 1939 she published the The History of Eduction in Chile and The Evolution of Secondary Education. In her works she expressed the belief that the Chileans tried to copy those nations that they considered grand and rich in knowledge, in their eagerness to surpass them. She wanted to provide an adequate education without imitating other countries.

Amanda Labarca stood out among the Latin American professors because she wanted to give education a new orientation and apply experimental methods. In her work Basis for a Political Education, she demanded a realistic education that was adapted to the people and promoted the real function of education, which was to serve the family, the population and democracy. She wanted to take education out of the school classroom and place it in the streets where it could benefit the common people.

She wrote two more books, La Education Decadente (The Decadent Education, 1940) and Desvelos del Alma (Anxieties of the Soul ,1945) before she was named as a delegate to the United Nations. She was the leader of the section called Status of the Woman between 1947 and 1949. Was this the same section that Gabriela Mistral attended? This group encouraged women to believe that they should take part in national and international affairs with the goal of gaining equality and economic rights. 1949 was the year in which Chilean woman gained the right to vote in national elections. She does NOT seem to have had a direct role in gaining this most important right. since she was working at the United Nations.

During this period she became a widow. She returned to Chile in the early 1950's to resume her activities at the University and in feminist organizations. She served as editor of a book in 1953 and published yet another book Chile ante Las Nationes Unidas (Chile before the United Nations, 1957).

In the 1960's she became a distinguished member of the Faculty of Philosophy and Education of the University of Chile. The Academy of Political, Social, and Moral Science gave her similar honor in 1969. During this time period she also participated in an experimental school called Manuel de Salas, that depended on the University of Chile. It worked in the area called San Rafael, a "poblacion" or poor area.

Her last years 1970-1975 (her late eighties) were spent in a tranquil enviroment with her daughter and her grandaughter. She published occasional commentaries in the newspaper, El Mercurio and presided at feminist organizations in Chile. Until the hour of her death, she hosted important intellectuals in her home.

She died in January of 1975. She had a long and prolific life writing many books in the field of Eduction and Psychology. Her later years saw the demise of democratic government and rule by the dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1972. The encyclopedia article that I read and tried to translate does not mention what she thought about this terrible transition. The next lady that I have chosen as a "Worthy Woman" did express her views about the Pinochet dictatorship.

V Matilde Urrutia

This lady was the second or third wife of Pabuel Neruda, the highly renowned Nobel Prize winning poet of the 20th century. (Pablo Neruda was the second to receive this honor. Gabriel Mistral was the first). When I toured Neruda's home on Isla La Negra, the guide spoke of the loving care that Matilde Urrutia bestowed upon her dying husband. She was a "caretaker", as are many women of our society and other societies. She married Neruda in 1952, and she was

somewhat younger than he was. After he died of cancer in 1973, Mathilde gave a faithful account of how he spent his last hours, how he had been taken from their home by the military forces, and the difficulties he had experienced getting medical care.

She daringly smuggled out his memoirs called *Confieso Que He Vivido* (I Confess to Having Lived) for publication. After one of their two homes had been ransacked, Matilde remained in Chile at their home in Isla Negra. Surrounded by friends, she managed Neruda's estate and brought out many of her late husband's unpublished works. She too died of cancer in 1885, unable to see the end of the military rule that she so detested.(20)

She was part and parcel of that group within Chile who tried to stand up to the excesses of the period of military dictatorship. The Chileans with whom I discussed politics expressed their great satisfaction with the demise of the Pinochet dictatorship and the return of representative government, of democracy.

The last lady whom I have selected as a "Worthy Woman of Chile" is a famous actress. She was said to be the most famous lady in Chile today, an eighty year old woman who had been working for nearly sixty years. What would she say about the position of women in contemporary Chilean society?

VI Ana Gonzalez

Ana Gonzalez is recognized as the "leading lady" of Chile. I was privileged to meet her and have tea with her, and discuss her feelings about her own role in Chile both as a leading dramatist and an advocate of womens rights. On the afternoon of July 25, 1995, I and a colleague went to her apartment and chatted for about an hour and a half.

I had previously gotten reprints of newspaper articles that established that she was born in 1915, had graduated from secondary school (Liceo No.2) in 1933 and had, one year after her graduation, begun her career in the theater, where she had worked ever since. She had toured Latin America and some cities of Europe (Madrid and Paris). She has also performed in movies and television. She has received much acclamation and many awards, one example being a "Special Distinction" award given by the World Council of Education. This was a lady who was greatly renowned and respected; it was an honor to have been granted an interview with her.

I found Anita Gonzalez to be a delightful person, unassuming and modest. She was very happy to be visited by two American "professors". (My colleague Sarah Marquez served as translator, although I understood much of what was said... but not all.) She seemed surprised that I had chosen her as an eminent woman of modern Chile. I told her that from all I had read she was the Sarah Bernhard or Helen Hayes of Chile. She shook her head in denial, but I think it is true.

She told us that she came from the "upper" class, and that people from her family were not likely to go into an occupation like the theater. However she stated that she was never a sex symbol and she never showed parts of her body in an immodest way. She said she had always believed that she was ugly, but this was certainly not true. She was an attractive well-formed

woman even at eighty.

She said that early in her career she often played the role of a servant. She felt that her performance depicting the ill treatment of servants had done much to bring about the passage of laws that improved the position of female servants. She enjoyed playing serious roles such as in George Bernard Shaw's plays, Pygmalion and Elizabeth I. She had also played Queen Isabel. She had worked very hard for almost sixty years, but she had not retired yet, and was planning to work again in January 1996.

Her personal life included a good marriage, but no children. She became a widow thirty years ago, and there was still an ache in her heart. She showed us pictures of her husband who had worked for the for the President Frei of the 1960's. Her husband was a handsome man who vaguely resembled John Wayne.

When asked to state her opinion as to the status of women today, she sid she did not believe that women had achieved real political or economic equality. Moreover she believed that men on the whole were more macho than ever. They were jealous, fearful and resentful of women who had succeeded as lawyers and doctors. Her opinion were reinforced by another lady who served as her companion and kept the records of her finances But Ana Gonzalez was the lady who had the success and the fame... which she had achieved because of her tenacity and her talent. She was a fine living example of a "worthy woman of Chile".

CONCLUSION

Perhaps this study of important women of Chile, both past and present, raises more questions than it answers. To a casual observer visiting Chile for the first time, it appears that women occupy a similar position to that which they have achieved in most western cultures. There are women politicians in both houses of the legislature, and they tend to focus in their legislative attempts, on problems of women and children in Chilean society. The times my colleagues and I, in the Fulbright summer group asked questions about discrimination, abortion rights, and battering of women, we always received the same polite answers whether from men or women, i.e.: Yes, there were some problems, but there was equal accession to all the professions. Statistics were cited, showing the great numbers of women, at least in teaching and administration. So what are we to make of the long history of machismo and its adjunct, marianismo in what is mostly a transplanted Hispanic culture? And what about the comments of Ana Gonzlez that testify to the enduring existence of these philosophies?

The serious student of women's history will want to focus on five or six problems indicated by the brief studies of the six women that I have selected.

1. What is the truth about Inez Suarez? Was she a real heroine or a whore with a vicious streak?

2. What was the role of Indian women in resisting the conquistadores? This is an area of women's history that has never been investigated to my knowledge.

3. Were there any major contributions by women in the Chilean struggle for independence?

4. The lives of Gabriela Mistral and Amanda Labarca took place in the same time period Compare them in terms of accomplishment, fame, and adherence to the ideas of machismo and marianismo.

5. What, if anything, did Chilean women contribute to the restoration of democracy in Chile in 1989?

WORTHY WOMEN OF CHILE: Endnotes

1. Edna Ferguson, Chile (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943) p. 75. The encyclopedia article that I translated from Spanish did not mention that Inez de Suarez was the mistress of Pedro de Valdivia or that she was a beautiful lady.

2. Ibid., p.110

3. Ibid., p. 120.

4. "Indian Revolt in Peru" in Editor, June E. Haber Women in Latin American History (UCLA 1976) pp. 29-31. The letter that Micaela wrote to her husband is translated in its entirety.

5. Evelyn P. Stevens, " Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo in Latin America" in Editor, Ann Pescatello, Female & Male in Latin America (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973) pp. 94-6.

6. Mrs. George B. Mercuri, Three Years in Chile (1966) pp. 82-3.

7. Langston Hughes, Selected Poems of Gabriela Mistral (Indiana University Press 1966) p.15.

8. Martin C. Taylor, Gabriela Mistral's Religious Sensibility (University of California Press, 1968) p. 8.

9. Ibid., pp4-5.

10. Ibid., p.9

11. Ibid., p.10

12. Francisco Aguilera "Foreword" in Editor and Translator Doris Dana, Selected Poems of Gabriela Mistral (John Hopkins Press 1971) p xi.

13. Ibid., p. 14. Ms. Dana's translation of Gabriela's Mistral is very beautiful and compelling.

14. Ibid., pp. xii and xiii.

15. Taylor, op. cit., p.11.

16. Ibid., pp.13-14. Gabriela even concocted a story that a group of young Nazis called "Mocidades" had killed him.

17. Dana, op.cit., p.3.

18. Hughes, op.cit., pp. 11-12.

19. All of the information in this biography came from an encyclopedia article that I received in the National Library of Chile. I have spent several hours translating it, and have probably missed many points in it. I found much more information in Edna Fergusson's book Chile about what Amanda Labarca wrote. It is contained in a book called Mejoramiento de la Vida Campesina (Betterment of Rural Life). This book was not mentioned in the article I copied in Chile. Some of the parts of this book quoted by Edna Fergusson include

Chaos and political disorientation above. Discontent, undernourishment, and physiological misery below. Poverty in almost all... What are we waiting for? The revolution?

The misery of lowest class is due to undernourishment, which leads to laziness and shiftlessness. The general fecklessness and lack of responsibility are the fault of the Spanish conqueror, who went about sowing sons for whom he assumed no responsibility, letting the woman take the blame and the onus. (p.195)...

I have to wonder why this book was not mentioned in the encyclopedia article. Edna Fergusson,s book was written in 1943, anad certainly does not give a complete picture of Amanda Labarca Hubertson. To understand her contributions, it is necessary to do much more research.

20. Historical Dictionry of Chile, Editor Salvatore Bizzarro, 1987 p. 507.